№ 10.

The Parable of the Talents.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

Pariſh-Church of St. ANN, WESTMINSTER,

ON

Thurſday, MARCH the 24*th*, 1747/8.

Before the

GOVERNORS of the *Middleſex-Hoſpital*,

FOR

Sick *and* Lame, *and for* Lying-in Married Women.

By *EDWARD COBDEN*, D. D.
Arch-Deacon of *London*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of the SOCIETY.

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To His Grace,

WILLIAM *Duke of* PORTLAND, *Preſident.*

The Right Hon. Lord Viſcount *Trentham.*
Sir *Hugh Smithſon*, Bart.
Sir *William Beauchamp Proctor*, Bart.
Sir *Peter Warren*, Knight of the Bath.
} *Vice-Preſidents.*

And the reſt of the Gentlemen concerned in the MIDDLESEX-HOSPITAL.

THIS

SERMON

Preach'd and Publiſh'd at their Requeſt, with his ſincereſt Wiſhes for the Proſperity of a Charity ſo well contrived, and ſo generouſly carried on for the public Good, is humbly dedicated by

Their moſt Obedient

and reſpectful Servant,

EDWARD COBDEN.

MAT. XXV. 19.

After a long Time the LORD *of thoſe Servants cometh and reckoneth with them.*

UR Bleſſed Saviour, the moſt divine and infallible Teacher that ever appeared in the World, who both delivered the moſt uſeful and important Doctrines, and underſtood how to deliver them in the moſt effectual Manner; in Condeſcenſion to the perverſeneſs of our Tempers, and the weakneſs of our Capacities, is pleaſed to diſpenſe them to us under ſeveral very lively and beautiful Reſemblances. He knew the great Averſion and ſtrong Prejudices in human Nature, and how unwilling we are to receive the moſt heavenly Truths when tender'd to us in their naked Simplicity, and therefore, repreſents the Almighty dealing with us under the Similitude of Men's dealing with one another; that ſo perceiving the Equity of it in another's Caſe, we may make the Application to

ourſelves, and either reform by our own Reproof, or ſtand condemned by our own Sentence. Of this there are two very remarkable Inſtances in the Chapter before us, One in the Parable of the ten Virgins; the other, in this, which I intend for the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe, the Subſtance of which, it may not be improper, very briefly to lay before you.

The great Redeemer of the World, in his Diſpenſation of the Grace of the Goſpel, which he ſtiles the Kingdom of Heaven, here compares himſelf to a Lord travelling into a diſtant Country, who committed to his ſeveral Servants Talents, in Proportion to their Station and Abilities, to traffic with, and to make the beſt improvement they could againſt his Return. After which, he calls every one of them to an Account, how they had employ'd their reſpective Truſts. Thoſe who had improved their Stock, he receives with Favour, encourages with Applauſe, and diſtinguiſhes with a Reward; and ſuch as had been careleſs and negligent, and made no improvement of their Talent, he rebukes with due Severity, and conſigns to juſt Puniſhment. The Application of this expreſſive Parable, to our own Caſe is ſo very plain and eaſy, and the Juſtice of the Procedure ſo evident, that I need not ſpend Words about it. I ſhall only beg leave to draw and enforce a few Obſervations which flow from it without ſtraining, and which ſeem to be chiefly intended by our bleſſed Saviour.

Firſt, I would obſerve to you, that we all receive our ſeveral Talents at the Hands of God.

2*dly*, I ſhall conſider ſome of the chief Talents which are intruſted to Mankind.

3*dly*, The End for which they are entruſted to us, and the Uſes we are to make of them.

4*thly*, The ſtrict Account we ſhall be called to for them.

5*thly*

5thly, and *laſtly*, The Rewards and Puniſhments that will follow our Improvement or Neglect of them.

Our firſt Obſervation, is, that we all receive our ſeveral Talents at the Hands of God.

This is the firſt Piece of Inſtruction we learn from the Parable: That our Great Lord and Maſter is the diſpoſer of them, and that he diſtributes them ſeverally according to his Will and Pleaſure, in which he is likewiſe guided by the moſt unerring Wiſdom. For we ſee he diſpoſes of them according to the Capacity and fitneſs of the Perſons who receive them; had he given the five Talents to the ſlothful and indulgent Servant, what a noble Improvement had been loſt!

We ſhort-ſighted Creatures, may perhaps ſometimes repine and murmur, that we have not enough committed to our Truſt, but God knows our Capacities, and foreſees what our Endeavours will be, and therefore, in great Goodneſs and Compaſſion witholds from us ſeveral Bleſſings, that we may not be more inexcuſable and have more to anſwer for at the great Day of Reckoning.

That we receive all our Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings, all our Faculties of Soul and Body, all our Opportunities and Powers of doing Good from the Bounty of our Creator, is a Truth, that I preſume we have more Occaſion to be reminded of than inform'd, it is what no one can be ignorant of who reads and believes the Scriptures; there we have it frequently inculcated that God giveth to all Life and Breath, and all Things. And the Aſſertion of St. *James*, is ſo very clear and deciſive, Chap. i. that I need not multiply Quotations to this purpoſe. 17. *Every good, and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning.* 'Tis from the fulneſs of that immenſe Ocean that we all receive our ſeveral Graces and Perfections, from that Sun of Glory we derive all our glimmering Lamps, which may be of Uſe to our

ſelves,

ſelves, or of Direction to others. This, the wiſeſt of the Heathens, even ſuch as acknowledged a Providence, were unwilling to allow. They made a Difference, between the Bleſſings they receiv'd, in this Reſpect, as may be obſerv'd from TULLY. No one, ſays he, ever thought himſelf obliged to the Gods for his Virtue and Goodneſs, but for his Wealth, Honour, and Safety. And in another Place he obſerves, it is a common Notion among Mankind (*Omnes mortales ſic habent*) that they receive all the Conveniencies and external Bleſſings of Life from the favour of *Heaven*; but as to their Improvement in Knowledge, or Progreſs in Virtue, for theſe no one thinks himſelf indebted to the Divine Bounty. The Reaſon I conceive of their making this Diſtinction, might be, that the inward Gifts and Graces of their Mind appear'd ſomewhat more in their own Power, τὰ ἐφ ἡμεῖν, as they ſtil'd them, and not altogether ſo contingent and precarious as thoſe external Bleſſings, of which, therefore, they fondly aſſum'd all the Merit to themſelves. But alas! it was but a vain Conceit, for as after all the Toil and Labour of the Husbandman, after all his Plowing and Sowing the fruitfulneſs of the Field, and the Plenty of the Harveſt depend upon the Clouds and Weather; ſo notwithſtanding all our Cultivation and Endeavours, the Improvement of our Souls in Wiſdom and Virtue, depends upon the Influence and Benediction of Heaven.

Hab. i. 16. We ſhould learn from hence not *to Sacrifice to our own Drag*, not to grow proud and conceited of our own Gifts and Graces; but aſcribe all to the Divine Bounty. For *who made thee to differ from another, or what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive?*

This ſhould teach us, likewiſe, to depend upon God's Goodneſs for them, and to be earneſt and diligent in our Application to the Throne of Grace, as for all our worldly Comforts and Enjoyments; ſo for all the Gifts and Graces of the Soul, and for all the invaluable Talents which are entruſted to us Mortals. Some

Some of which I am in the next place to conſider. Among ſeveral that might be ſummed up, I ſhall confine my ſelf to four, which ſeem to be the Principal.

The Firſt I ſhall mention, is Wealth: This is what the Metaphor of the Talents is borrowed from, and therefore itſelf may juſtly come in for a Place among them. As it may likewiſe on the Account of that Value and Regard with which it is entertain'd in the World; the many Comforts and Advantages it is calculated to procure, and the many excellent Uſes to which it may be apply'd. This is what engages the Affections, and dazzles the Eyes of a great Part of Mankind, what they contrive and plot, and travel and toil for. For this they will ſtand at no Difficulties, nor decline any Pains or Dangers, it being the great *Diana* which almoſt all the World worſhipeth; and provided it be with Moderation, and a due Temper of Mind, with Submiſſion to the Will of Providence, and by lawful Methods, a Competency of it may well be deſir'd and endeavour'd after, ſince without it, the Conveniences, and even Neceſſaries of Life, are hardly to be obtain'd: And eſpecially ſince the Poſſeſſion of it gives us the Power of encouraging the Merit, and relieving the Neceſſities of our Brethren, and doing many conſiderable Acts of Kindneſs and Charity.

Power is another Talent entruſted to us by our great Lord and Maſter; by *whom Kings Reign and Princes decree Juſtice*, and from whoſe Throne all the ſeveral Branches of Human Authority are derived; whether that of Maſters over their Families, of Governors in their reſpective Provinces, or of Kings and Princes over their People. 'Tis the great Governor of Heaven and Earth that puts the Rod into the Hands of the Parent, as well as the Sword into thoſe of the Magiſtrate: His Subſtitutes they are, to his Will and Inſtructions they ought to conform themſelves, and to him they are at laſt to give an exact Account.

Knowledge and Underſtanding is another glorious Talent entruſted to Mankind. This is more Valuable and Excellent than the other, as it is the Improvement and Perfection of our better and more exalted Part. This is the peculiar Ornament and Prerogative of Man, and diſtinguiſhes him from the brute Part of the Creation. By this he is enabled to carry his Contemplations beyond either his Sphere of Action, or the Reach of his Senſes; to conſider and adore the Wiſdom of his Maker in the Structure and Contrivance of this Stupenduous Frame of the Univerſe, to compare the Value and Beauty of Things with one another, to reflect upon their Conſequences, and to look beyond his Point of Duration here, into a boundleſs Futurity. This is a Ray of heavenly Light, which at the ſame Time it directs his own Steps, he may communicate to others without Loſs or Diminution. And altho' Man, as he was from the firſt Moment of his being inſtated in Power and Dominion over the reſt of his Fellow Creatures, might in ſome Senſe be ſaid to be created in the Image of God, yet this gives him a much greater Reſemblance to him. Both of them doubtleſs, are very extraordinary Privileges, ſince by aſpiring after one, the Angels forfeited Heaven, and by a Thirſt after the other, our Parents loſt Paradiſe.

The laſt Talent I ſhall mention, which infinitely outweighs them all, is that of Grace; without this, the others are but Cyphers of no Signification. 'Tis this alone which gives a Value to them, and makes them bear ſome Figure in the Account. This is that *Pearl of great Price* which is worthy our attaining, tho' we parted with all the reſt for the Purchaſe. 'Twas chiefly, if not ſolely, with regard to *this* that our bleſſed Saviour delivered the Parable, as may be inferred from the Beginning of it. The others before mentioned, have in themſelves no *eſſential* Goodneſs, but are Good and Bad according to the *Purpoſes*, for which they are applied; nor

nor are they to be deſired, on their own Account, but purely with a farther View: This has a real intrinſick Virtue, and is to be endeavoured after, with our utmoſt Zeal and Induſtry merely for its own Sake. Our attaining farther Degrees of the other, unleſs we are guided and aſſiſted by *this* in the Uſe of them, will be of very little Service to us. For the rich Man's encreaſing his Wealth, and adding farther to his Stores, the powerful Perſon's raiſing his Authority and extending his Dominion far and wide, the wiſe Man's enlarging his Wiſdom, ſo as to be able to fathom the greateſt Depths of Nature, unleſs they have a religious Diſpoſition of Soul, and the Grace of God to make Uſe of what they attain, will be of no Advantage to them: But every Addition they ſhall make to *this*, will not only be an encreaſe of Happineſs in it ſelf, but improve likewiſe the Value of every other Endowment and Poſſeſſion, by converting them all into real Bleſſings. Tho' we had all Wealth, and all Power, and all Knowledge, yet unleſs we have the Grace to Uſe them, we are as Nothing; and it will Profit us Nothing: Our Riches are an Incumbrance; our Power a Snare; and all our Knowledge, Vanity and Folly. For as I obſerved before, that it is Knowledge which diſtinguiſhes the Man, ſo 'tis Grace which diſtinguiſhes the Chriſtian.

Since therefore a right Application of our Talents, is ſo neceſſary to give a Value to them, our third Branch will not be improper, which is to conſider the Uſes to which they are to be applied,

I am ſenſible I now ſpeak to ſome who are eminently diſtinguiſhed with ſeveral of the Talents here mentioned; and I hope too, endow'd with Grace for the right Uſe and Application of them. However, it is my Duty, as a Chriſtian Miniſter, to perſuade you to ſtill higher and farther Attainments in *This*, both for your own Advantage, and that of the reſt of Mankind; and that you

you may render all your other Talents valuable, to exhort you to poſſeſs your Souls with the ſincereſt Love of God and your Neighbour, and to aſpire after the moſt exalted Degrees of Grace and Charity. For when your Boſoms are warm'd and enliven'd by *this*, it will inſtruct you to lay out the Bleſſings of Fortune, with which Providence hath encompaſſed you, in cloathing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, relieving all the wants of the Neceſſitous, and all the Afflictions of the Miſerable. It will teach you to conſider which way you can beſt employ the Wealth and Treaſure you are Maſters of to the Glory of God and the Good of Mankind. Whether by raiſing Workhouſes for the Employment of the Poor and Idle, or Hoſpitals for the Sick and Diſabled, or encouraging Schools for the Advancement of Chriſtian Knowledge; whether in repairing or erecting Churches for the decent Diſcharge of Chriſtian Worſhip, or augmenting ſmall Livings, that the Clergy may be better qualified for their great Employment, and more ſucceſsful in the Execution of it. Theſe, and a thouſand Ways, God be thanked, we have of doing Good in our Generation, and of laying out our unrighteous *Mammon*, which our own Thoughts, if we are in good Earneſt, will readily ſuggeſt to us. Theſe it imports us well to conſider, and to apply the Subſtance we are bleſt with accordingly. Do not imagine you are wealthy, only in order to amaſs more Treaſures; your encreaſing your Talent in this Manner, is the greateſt Abuſe and Diminution of it, and your digging in the Earth for more, according to the true Intent of the Parable, is in reality, but hiding what you have.

It will inſtruct thoſe who are poſſeſs'd of Power and Authority to make Uſe of the Power they are entruſted with, for the ſuppreſſing all Profaneneſs and Immorality, and for the promoting Virtue, Godlineſs, and true Religion in the World. It will remind them whoſe Deputies and Miniſters

Ministers they are, and they will endeavour to obey his Will and imitate his Example

All Parents and Masters will *walk in their Houses with a perfect Heart, commanding their Children and Household to keep the Way of the Lord.* They will revive the too much neglected Duty of Family Religion, diligently instructing the Ignorant, seriously reproving the Vicious, and daily summoning all of them to a stated and orderly Devotion in their Houses, upon which the Virtue and Piety of the World, and the Improvement of the Seed sown in these Places, so much depend.

All Magistrates, to whose Care the Peace and Tranquility and good Order of the Country is committed, will be faithful and upright, vigilant and active in the Execution of their Trust. Such are the Guardians of the Rights and Privileges of the public Happiness and Safety of Mankind, and it becomes them to act as with Uprightness and Sincerity, so with Zeal and Diligence, to curb the Insolent and restrain the Seditious, and bring the stubborn Offender to Punishment, *that there be no breaking into our Dwellings, and no complaining in our Streets.*

Those whom indulgent Nature, and a liberal Education have distinguished with the glorious Ornaments of Knowledge and Understanding, the Gospel of Grace, and a Christian Charity will excite to *let their Light shine before Men, that they may see their good Works, and glorify their Father which is in Heaven.* This will persuade them to lay out all their Faculties in improving both themselves and others in a solid and religious Wisdom. They will consider, that they are not furnished with these extraordinary Endowments, purely for their own Advantage, and to raise the Admiration and dazzle the Eyes of Mankind, but to reflect the Lustre from whence they deriv'd it, and to direct the Steps of the wand'ring and uncertain Traveller. They will endeavour, still, by Study and Learning, to ad-

vance in Knowledge, but they will temper that Knowledge, and reſtrain their Deſires of it with the Fear of God, which is the trueſt and the only Wiſdom. They will brighten the Lamp of Reaſon with the more glorious Light of Revelation, and never aſpire to be wiſe above what is dictated by the Holy Spirit of God. They will carefully keep to the Tree of Life, and not taſte of that of Knowledge, in forbidden Inſtances. They will not raſhly intrude into Myſteries, nor cavil at every Thing which they cannot comprehend; well conſidering that *ſecret Things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe Things which are revealed, belong to us and our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of the Law.*

Deut. Chap. xix. 19.

By this Means, too, they will grow in Grace, the laſt Talent I mentioned. By which I underſtand the Divine Influence aſſiſting us in the pious Uſe and right Application of all our Powers and Perfections, and a diligent Endeavour to improve in them all for theſe bleſſed Ends and Purpoſes. This will inſtruct us to encreaſe the Light we have by diligently reading the holy Scriptures, meditating frequently upon divine and heavenly Things, and obſerving all the Opportunities of public and private Worſhip. This will excite us to cultivate our Minds with all the particular Graces of the Goſpel, ſuch as the Love and Fear of God, a Truſt in his Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and a Submiſſion to his Providence under all Diſpenſations. It will teach us an univerſal Love and good will to Mankind, and to have a ſtrict Regard to Truth and Juſtice in all our Dealings; endeavouring *in all Things to have a Conſcience void of Offence toward God and Man:* Still labouring after higher Attainments in the Knowledge of our Duty, and a greater exactneſs in the Practice of it. Nor will the Aſſiſtance of Heaven fail thoſe who thus uſe their faithful Endeavours. They will find their Powers

ſtill

ſtill encreaſing by the Exerciſe of them, and the more Light they ſpread around them, the more will ſpring up within them; and they will be ready, at all Times, to give a good Account of their Talents to their Maſter, at his Return.

Thus have I endeavoured to point out to you ſome of the Uſes to which the Treaſures we are entruſted with ought to be applied, and ſhewn you that all the Faculties of Nature, all the Improvements of Art or Science, all the Gifts of Fortune, and all the Endowments of Grace, are but ſo many Talents committed to our Care, to promote the Glory of God, and the Happineſs of our Fellow Creatures. That is, for the noble Ends of Chriſtian Charity. For they all center in this excellent Duty of Charity; which is the Bond of Perfection and of all Virtues, which is the *fulfilling of the Law* and the comprehenſive Summary of both Tables; and without which, all our other Virtues and Accompliſhments are to little Purpoſe.

But our Charity muſt not ſpend itſelf in ineffectual Wiſhes: It muſt be exerted in generous Actions and uſeful Deſigns. For this Purpoſe, ſeveral happy Methods and Schemes have been zealouſly promoted in this Kingdom, inſomuch that if any Thing gives us a comfortable Proſpect of our Country, in this Declenſion of its Glory, and extreme depravity of Manners, it is, that it hath pleas'd Providence to raiſe up ſo many exalted Spirits, who ſeem to make it their Study and Employment to contrive and Support theſe excellent Ways of Beneficence. And altho' we can hardly flatter ourſeves, that what is wiſely expended in Charity, comes up to what is ſquandered away in our Follies and Vanities; yet do the Streams of it riſe to ſuch a Height, and flow to ſuch an Extent, that it is ſurprizing from what Sources it ſhou'd be ſo conſtantly ſupplied. May this ſtand in the Gap for us, and ſave our ſinking Country

from

from Ruin! For be we well aſſur'd, that whoever with a moral Life is moſt eminent in Works of Piety and Beneficence, is not only the beſt Chriſtian, but the trueſt and moſt Generous Patriot.

But to draw ſomewhat nearer to my Point, among many other Methods of Charity I have hinted at, that of raiſing and encouraging Hoſpitals for the Sick and diſabled Poor, may be juſtly ſpoke of with Honour and Approbation.

The Arguments by which theſe are in general recommended, have often been diſplay'd with great Variety and Strength of Eloquence. As that they are a happy Means of improving the skill of Phyſic and Surgery, which contribute ſo much to the Health and Eaſe of Mankind, Bleſſings of ſo much Conſequence, that without them we can have little Enjoyment of any Thing here below.

That by our uniting what we can ſpare, in one common Stock, inconceivably more Relief may be afforded, than could have been, were it diſpos'd of in a private Manner. Inſomuch, that the Principal, even in a *literal* Senſe, encreaſes ten-fold, and the Intereſt in a *Spiritual* one, is invaluable, and will never fail. As when ſeveral Streams join together, they riſe to a River, and enrich a Country till the Ocean receives them, but in ſeparate Channels ſoon dry up and flow but little beyond the Fountain.

That in a private Way of relieving the Sick and infirm, for wants of diſcerning particular Caſes, and Underſtanding the Power of Medicines, more harm than good is often done by ſuch as intend well. Whereas, *here* Men, eminently qualified by Study and Experience, in every Art of Healing, are at Hand, to adminiſter the beſt Aſſiſtance, with united Counſel and Advice, and the moſt Indigent are as well preſcrib'd to, as the moſt Wealthy can be at their own Houſes.

Then

Then the Appointment of proper Food, that the Phyſic may have a ſpeedier and more beneficial Effect, is as neceſſary as the Phyſic itſelf. I need not mention what exact and diligent Care is here taken in this Particular; if the good *Samaritan* (whoſe Praiſe is in the Goſpel, and will laſt to the End of this World, and whoſe Reward will reach beyond it) cou'd have carried the wounded Traveller to an Infirmary of this Kind, inſtead of an Inn, how much of his Care and Concern might have been eas'd? He might then have ſpar'd his Injunction to *take Care of him*, and the Charges he was at to reſtore him, would not only have been more ſerviceable to the immediate Object of his Charity, but would have extended at the ſame Time, to the Benefit of many others.

We are ſufficiently ſenſible what a Satisfaction it is to a generous Mind to diſpoſe of it's Bounty on proper Objects; and whereas, in our private Benefactions, we are often impos'd upon by falſe Pretences from ſuch as conſume in Intemperance, what they gain by Hypocriſy, it wou'd be an Abſurdity to ſuppoſe that any will apply here for Relief, who are not real Objects of Compaſſion, becauſe they cannot eſcape an immediate Diſcovery, and the Aſſiſtance here afforded, were their Complaints without Truth, wou'd give them no preſent Pleaſure, nor future Advantage.

How many miſerable Creatures, how many Real Objects of Compaſſion languiſh and periſh for want of Relief, by being unable to attain it thus readily, and without Expence? Whereas, here is a *Betheſda* always open to thoſe who labour under the greateſt Infirmities, as far as the Pool can contain, (and it is great Pity but it ſhould be farther enlarged) and a good Angel, as it were, always ready to move the ſalutary Waters.

And that the Soul may not be neglected, while the Diſtempers of the Body are taken Care of, a proper Chaplain is provided to preach and read Prayers at

ſtated Seaſons, and to give them private Inſtructions ſuitable to their Condition and their Neceſſities; which we may juſtly expect will have a greater Influence with them, when they are ſoftened by Calamities, and ſequeſterd from all worldly Concerns. Then the Preſcriptions of our Divine Phyſician in the Goſpel, may be effectual to heal their wounded Conſciences, and raiſe their Thoughts to that Place where Pain and Sickneſs are for ever excluded; and the Impreſſions they receive, when melted down by affliction, may continue through the remaining part of their Lives: By which Means, thoſe two Branches of our Saviour's Commiſſion to his Diſciples, *to preach the Goſpel, and to heal the Sick*, will be at once fulfilled: And ſurely that Charity very well deſerves Encouragement, which is thus calculated to preſerve the Body, and to ſave the Soul.

Theſe important Advantages, which are common to *others*, the Infirmary I am *now* recommending, is as fairly entitled to, as any whatſoever; being ſituated in a healthy Air, conducted with great Order and Oeconomy, and extremely well accommodated for every Purpoſe of relieving thoſe whom Infirmity or Sickneſs (joyn'd with Poverty) have diſabled.

And there is an additional one, *peculiar* to *this*, which juſtly demands your tendereſt Care and Compaſſion; which is a Proviſion for indigent Women drawing near the Time of their Travail.

The Caſe of ſuch, without the Neceſſaries of Life to ſupport them, without any Accommodations for them, and without proper Aſſiſtance at hand to ſuccour them, when the Terrors of Death encompaſs them, and the Pains of Travail take hold of them, is perhaps as deplorable as human Nature in it's utmoſt Diſtreſs can preſent us with. The critical Seaſon of Child-birth is commonly ſo painful and dangerous, that it juſtifies our tender Mother the Church, in providing a particular Office

Office of Thankſgiving for ſuch as are delivered from it: And when the Scriptures would expreſs any extraordinary Inſtance of Torture and Peril, they often compare it to the Pangs and Agonies of a Woman in her Travail.

This is juſt, even when they are ſurrounded with all the Conveniences of Fortune, and all the Aſſiſtance of Skill, but where they are deſtitute of theſe, it muſt exceedingly aggravate the Miſery. A lively Repreſentation of ſuch an unhappy Scene, would be too ſhocking, even for our Imagination.

This Affliction, ſo peculiarly entailed on Woman, we ſhou'd be utterly at a Loſs how to Account for, did not the faithful Hiſtory of *Moſes* inform us, that it was inflicted as a Penalty on all the Daughters of *Eve*, for their Mothers fatal Tranſgreſſion in Paradiſe. And to me it appears as evident a Monument of the Fall, as the Diſorders on the Face of the Earth are of the univerſal Deluge.

This certainly affords a very urgent Call for our Compaſſion, and muſt excite our utmoſt Endeavours to alleviate a Puniſhment which is owing not to the immediate Crime, but to the misfortune of the Sufferers; at leaſt to take off thoſe additional Aggravations of it, with which it is attended in extreme Poverty.

For this Purpoſe, we cannot be inſenſible how neceſſary it is, that thoſe who have the Care of them at ſuch a Time, ſhould be well acquainted with the curious Texture of the human Frame, *which is ſo fearfully and wonderfully made.* For how many intricate Caſes frequently occur, and how many diſmal Conſequences often ariſe from forward Empirics in this Buſineſs? How many Lives (both of Infants and Mothers) are often loſt for want of diſcerning the critical Seaſon, and a proper Knowledge of our admirable Compoſition? And where the Lives are ſpar'd, many miſerable Creatures linger out

out their Days in Torture from the Wounds and Bruiſes they receive from Unskilful Hands. *(a)*

To remedy as much as poſſible theſe Calamities, juſtly demands the Concern of every Daughter of *Eve*, who muſt have a deep Senſe of them as being born *liable* to the ſame. And of every Son of *Adam*, out of Gratitude to Providence for being ſo kindly exempted from them, notwithſtanding he came into the World by them, and out of Pity to thoſe tender Softners of his Cares, and Companions of his Life: And both ſhould with united Hands and Hearts promote a Charity ſo well contriv'd for the Preſervation of two Lives at once.

Go on then, my Brethren, with Reſolution, and may the Bleſſing of Heaven attend you, in the purſuance of an Undertaking you are ſo generouſly engaged in. Go on, in raiſing this Foundation to greater Perfection, which, tho' it has made a progreſs, and reliev'd Numbers beyond expectation, yet it may be ſaid to be almoſt in its Infant State, and therefore implores your Aſſiſtance: And, as it is calculated for ſo many excellent Ends of Charity, extremely deſerves it; eſpecially as it is the only One deſign'd to redreſs one of the greateſt Grievances in Life.

May we, with Bowels of Compaſſion, hear (and what Chriſtian can hear them without Compaſſion) the Mournings of the Mother's in their Affliction, and with the moſt flowing Liberality deliver the Children as it were appointed unto Death, and may the Light of your good Examples ſtir up a holy Emulation in others, thus to lay out the Talents they are entruſted with to the beſt Advantage.

To encourage your Zeal and Perſeverance in this excellent Duty of Charity, I ſhould now proceed to the two laſt Branches of my Diſcourſe; which were to ſhew that we ſhall all one Day be call'd to an Account for

(a) See the Author's Poems, lately publiſhed, Page, 141.

our

our Talents, and be either punished or rewarded for our Neglect or Improvement of them.

But having already, I fear, trespassed upon your Patience, I shall only observe to you, that Reason and Scripture sufficiently assure us, that such a Day of Accounts will infallibly come. *We must all give an Account of what we have done in the Body, whether it be Good or Evil.* And that our blessed Saviour, who is to be the Judge of Quick and Dead, in describing the Process of that important Day, insists particularly on such Acts of Charity as we are at this Time met together to encourage. *I was Hungry, and ye gave me Meat, Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in, naked and ye cloathed me; I was Sick, and ye visited me.*

2 Cor. Chap. v. 10.

Mat. Chap. xxv 36.

And God grant, that by our being unwearied in this Labour of Love, and not defective in any other Duties of Christianity, we may all of us receive that welcome Sentence.——Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World—— thro Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom with the Holy Ghost, &c.

FINIS.